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HUAC Echoes Birchites on Oswald Role

TIMING its report to almost the eve of appearance of the Warren Committee's report on the assassination of President Kennedy, the House Un-American Activities Committee released its conclusion that Communist Party "propaganda and agitation" was responsible.

The report by the racist chairman of HUAC, Rep. Edwin E. Willis of Louisiana, followed the line of the full-page ads of the John Birch Society last December, in which that fascist outfit claimed Lee Harvey Oswald, "the Marxist," acted on "orders." With even the FBI's and the already indicated Warren Commission conclusion that there was no conspiracy, foreign or domestic, and that Oswald was "alone" in this crime, HUAC could hardly claim that "Communist orders" were responsible. So Willis limited his report to blaming "Communist propaganda."

NO HEARINGS

HUAC didn't even hold hearings or call the witnesses it usually has ready in its stables. The ostensible reason for the report was to recommend that assassination of a president or vice-president be termed a federal crime. If that recommendation were seriously meant, it might have been submitted at the start, not the end of the congressional session. The report was clearly an effort to get into the act and prejudice the atmosphere against the Warren Commission's indicated conclusion that not ideology but mental sickness was the explanation.

Willis tried the usual McCarthyite tactic of "guilt by association" to somehow link Communists to the Puerto Rican nationalist shooting at the White House in 1950. Because the Communist Party has always been sympathetic to the struggle for independence of Puerto Ricans and, despite some disagreements, also with nationalist forces, Willis finds a relationship to the shootings in Washington 14 years ago.

Like the Birchites who have been trying to shift the onus of murder from the rightists camp, Willis pictured Oswald as "by his own admission" a Marxist. Left entirely unanswered is the strong evidence that Oswald was a CIA agent (as his own mother asserts he was) and that his not too skillful professed "Marxism" was a required tactic of any secret operative.

HUAC's report was apparently also timed to feed the propaganda mills of Sen. Goldwater's flock of Rightists campaigners. Their main cry is that the U.S. government is already "infiltrated" with "Communists" and that Goldwater will save America from a "red takeover."

The Warren Committee's report, its spokesmen indicated, will be released a week after Labor Day. It was held up until after the two conventions.

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